

# **STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON CAREERS AS CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS**

**A thesis submitted to the graduate school in partial  
Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Of master of science (international accounting)**

**Universiti utara malaysia**

**BY**

**Nadji Salmi**

**April, 2010**

## **PERMISSION TO USE**

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Post Graduate degree from the Universiti Utara Malaysia, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part., for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Lecturer or the Lecturers who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Dean of the Graduate School which my thesis was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the Universiti Utara Malaysia in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Request for permission to copy or to make other use of material in this thesis in wholly or in part should be addressed to:

**Dean of Graduate School**

**Universiti Utara Malaysia**

**060 10 Sintok**

**Kedah Darul Aman**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the factors that impact on student's intentions to their career choice .A questionnaire-based survey was administered to both accounting students in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. The results show that four factors (Perceptions, Level of Interest in Accounting, Intrinsic and Extrinsic, Major Human Influencers or Referents) are determinants of students' career.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

All praise to Allah s.w.t, the lead of the world, blessing and peace upon our prophet Muhammad s.a.w. for giving guidance, courage and spirit to me in order to complete this project paper as expected.

First of all, sincere appreciation to Dr .Shamharir Abidin for his supervision, help support, knowledge and encouragement throughout this project. Without him, I will never finish and complete this research paper. Likewise, I would like to thank my second supervisor, Dr .Shahmir Abdullah for his advice and guidance in writing my thesis.

My thanks also to all those involve directly and indirectly especially my parents, brothers, sisters, friends, fellow classmates, staff of school of accounting and the UUM in general in making this project a valuable experience.

To all people I have mentioned, thank you very much.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Permission to use	IV
Abstract	IV
Acknowledgment	IV
Table of Content	IV
List of Tables	IV
List of Abbreviations	IV
<b>CHAPTER ONE:</b>	
1.1 Introduction	1
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Perceptions of the Accounting Profession	5
2.3 Level of Interest in Accounting	6

2.4 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Career Related Factors	7
2.5 Major Human Influencers or Referents	9

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Target population	13
3.2 Sample	13
3.3 Instrument	13
3.4 Data collection	14
3.5 Statistical analysis	15

### **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

4.1 Introduction	17
4.2 General perceptions	18
4.3 Career choice motivation data	19
4.4 Career options	20
4.5 Perceived constraints of the profession	21
4.6 Factors analysis	24
4.7 Correlations	28

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

5.1 Strategies to encourage accounting students	30
5.2 Conclusion	32
<b>QUESTIONNAIRE:</b>	34
<b>REFERENCES:</b>	44

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Descriptive Information	17
Table 4.2	General perceptions	18
Table 4.3	Career choice motivation data	
Table 4.4	Career options	20
Table 4.5	Perceived constraints of the profession	21
Table 4.6	Future career plans	
Table 4.7	Respondent's ultimate goal as a CA	23
Table 4.8	Attributes influencing a student's vocational selection	23
Table 4.9	Factor analyses	24
Table 4.10	Inter-Factor Correlations	28



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**UUM** = Universiti Utrara Malaysia

**MIA** = Malaysian Institute of Accountants

**CIMA**= Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

**MACPA** = Malaysian Association of Certified Public Accountants

**ACCA**= Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

**CA** = Chartered Accountants

**TPB** = Theory of Planned Behavior

**CPA**= Certified Public Accountant

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Career choice is a complex phenomenon that can be better appreciated through a study of its key components, i.e. career and choice (Webster's Dictionary, 1998). Dating back to the seminal works of Hughes (1937) career has been the focus of many studies. However, the contemporary formulations of the concept by critical realists embody a layered conception that embraces subjective experiences and objective structures of work in interplay (Layder, 1993).

The definition (choice) incorporates two components: First is the availability of alternatives, which presents an objective reality, and the second one, the act of preference, which involves a subjective process. If a reference to career choice is made, availability of career choices and the dynamics of choosing a career should be examined. Hence, in order for career choice to take place, there should be alternative career routes available and there should be an individual preference between these career options (Marshall, 1989).

Career choice is a subject which has attracted academic, professional as well as public attention, due to its multifaceted nature. Since career is a result of the interplay between individuals within organizational and social structures, it yields well to analysis from diverse perspectives ranging from occupational psychology to organizational sociology. Research on career choice is not uncommon on occupational groups such as accountants and health care professionals (see

The contents of  
the thesis is for  
internal user  
only

## REFERENCES

- Abdullah, M. (2001). Akauntan profesional: Pelajar Melayu bertanggapan lapuk, Pendidikan, Utusan Malaysia, 25 June, p.6.
- Adams, S. J., L. J. Pryor and Adams, S. L. (1994) Attraction and Retention of High- Aptitude Students in Accounting: An Exploratory Longitudinal Study, *Issues in Accounting Education*, 9(1), 45-58
- Ahmed, K., Alam, K.F. & Alam, M. 1997. An empirical study of factors affecting students' career choice in New Zealand. *Accounting Education: An International Journal*, 6(4):325-335.
- Albrecht, W.S. and Sack, R.J. (2000) Accounting education: charting the course through a perilous future, *Accounting Education Series*, Vol. No. 16, American Accounting Association, Sarasota, FL.
- Allen, C.L., 2004, Business students' perceptions of the image of accounting, *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 19(2), 235-258.
- Auyeung, P and Sands, J. (1997) Factors influencing accounting students' career choice: a cross-cultural validation study, *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 6 (1), 13-23.
- Brown, M. H. (1994) Diversity of Career Options is Focus of Recruitment Campaign, *Ohio CPA Journal*, 53(2), 26-31
- Byrne, M and Willis, P. (2005) Irish Secondary Students' Perceptions of the Work of an Accountant and Accounting Profession, *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 14(4), 367-381.

- Chan, S.Y. & Ho, S.M. 2000. Desired attributes of public accounting firms in the job selection process: an empirical examination of accounting graduates' perceptions. *Accounting Education: An International Journal*, 9 (4):315-327.
- Carcello, J.V; Copeland, J.E; Hermanson, R.H and Turner, D.H (1991). A public accounting career: The gap between students' expectation and staff experiences. *Accounting Horizons*, (September). pp. 1-11
- Carpenter, C.G. and Strawser, R.H. (1970). Job Selection Preferences of Accounting Students. *The Journal of Accountancy*, June, pp. 84-86
- Chen, C., Jones, K.T. & D.D. McIntyre, 2005, A reexamination of the factors important to selection of accounting as a major, *Accounting and the Public Interest*, 5, 14-31.
- Cohen, J. and Hanno D.M. (1993) An analysis choice of accounting as a major, *Issues in Accounting Education*, 8(2), 219-238.
- Collin, A. (1998) 'New Challenges in the Study of Career', *Personnel Review*, 27(5): 412–26.
- Lent, R.W. and Brown, S.D. (1996) 'Social Cognitive Approach to Career Development: An Overview', *Career Development Quarterly*, 44(4): 310–22.
- Evans, P. K. (1974) The Decision to Become a Chartered Accountant, *CA Magazine*, 104 (1), 54-58
- Fedoryshyn, M and Hintz, A. (2000) Where are all the accounting students?, *New Accountant*, 16(1), 27-32.
- Fedoryshyn, M.W. & T.N. Tyson, 2003, The impact of practitioner presentation on student attitudes about accounting, *Journal of Education for Business*, 78(5), 273-284.

- Felton, S., Buhr, N. & Northey, M. 1994. Factors influencing the business student's choice of a career in chartered accountancy. *Issues in Accounting Education*, 9(1), Spring: 131- 141.
- Felton, S., Dimnick, T. & M. Northey, 1995, A theory of reasoned action model of the Chartered Accountant career choice, *Journal of Accounting Education*, 13(1), 1-19.
- Geiger, M.A. and Ogilbly, S.M. (2000) The first course in accounting: students' perceptions and their effect on the decision to major in accounting, *Journal of Accounting Education*, 18(2), 63-78.
- Gul, F. A., Andrew, B. H., Leong, S. C., and Ismail, Z. (1989) Factors Influencing Choice of Discipline of Study – Accountancy, Engineering, Law and Medicine, *Accounting and Finance*, 29(2), pp.93-100
- Hardin, J.R., O'Bryan, D. & J.J. Quinn, 2000, Accounting versus engineering, law and medicine: perceptions of influential high school teachers, *Advances in Accounting*, 17, 205-220.
- Hartwell, C.L., Lightle, S.S. & B. Maxwell, 2005, High School Students' perceptions of accounting, *The CPA Journal*, 75(1), 62-67.
- Holland, J.L. (1966) *The Psychology of Vocational Choice* (Waltham, MA: Blaisdell).
- Holland, J.L. (1973) *The Psychology of Vocational Choice* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall).
- Hermanson, D.R., Hermanson, R.H. & Ivancevich, S.H. 1995. Are America's top business students steering clear of Accounting? *The Ohio CPA Journal*, 54(2):26-30.
- Hughes, E. (1937) 'Institutional Office and the Person', *American Journal of Sociology*, 43: 404-13.

- Inman, B. C., Wenzler, A., and Wickert, P. D. (1989) Square Pegs in Round Holes: Are Accounting Students Well-Suited to Today's Accounting Profession?, *Issues in Accounting Education*, 4(1), 29-47.
- Jackman, S.M. & Hollingworth, A. 2004. Who wants to be an accountant? I don't. Paper presented at SAAA/IAAER Conference, Durban, South Africa.
- Kim, D., Markham, F.S. and Cangelosi, J.D., 2002. Why students pursue the business degree: a comparison of business majors across universities. *Journal of education for Business*, 78 (1), 28-32.
- Kim, J. and Mueller, C. W. (1978) *Introduction to Factor Analysis*, Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications
- Kochanek, R.F. & Norgaard, C.T. 1985. Student perceptions of alternative accounting careers – Part 1. *The CPA Journal*, 55(5):36-43.
- Layder, D. (1993) *New Strategies in Social Research*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Linden, Y.V.D. (1987) An investigation into students' motivation for selecting accounting as a career, Working Paper No.58, Department of Accounting and Finance, Massey University, New Zealand.
- Lowe, D.R. & Simons, K. 1997. Factors influencing choice of business majors – some additional evidence: a research note. *Accounting Education*, 6(1):39-45.
- Malthus, S.M. & C. Fowler, 2003, Becoming a Chartered Accountant in the New Zealand provinces. *New Zealand Journal of Applied Business Research*, 2(1), 13-29.

- Marshall, R. (2003) Calling on tomorrow's professionals, *Chartered Accountants Journal*, 82(1), pp. 4-9.
- Marriott, P. and Marriott, N. (2003) Are we turning them off: a longitudinal study of undergraduate accounting students' attitudes toward accounting as a profession, *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 12(2), 113-133.
- Mauldin, S. et al. (2000) The accounting principles instructor's influence on students' decision to major in accounting, *Journal of Education for Business*, pp. 142-148.
- Mauldin, S., Crain, J. L. and Mounce, P. H. (2000) The Accounting Principles Instructor's Influence on Students' Decision to Major in Accounting, *Journal of Education for Business*, 75 (3), 142-148.
- Mladenovic, R. (2000) An investigation into ways of challenging introductory accounting students' negative perceptions of accounting, *Accounting Education*, 9(2), 135-155
- Mohammad A.B., Maisarah M.S. and Ainun A.M. (2002) 'Ethics and the Accounting Profession in Malaysia', paper presented at the Asian Academic Accounting Association Conference, 28-31 October, Nagoya Japan.
- Nelson, I.T., Vendrsyk, V.P., Quirin, J.J. & Allen, R.D. 2002. No, the sky is not falling: Evidence of accounting student characteristics at FSA schools, 1995-2000. *Issues in Accounting Education*, 17(3):269-287.
- Paolillo, J.G.P. & Estes, R.W. 1982. An empirical analysis of career choice factors among accountants, attorneys, engineers, and physicians. *The Accounting Review*, 57(4):785-793.
- Pollock, K.S., Papiernik, J.C. & M.D. Slaubaugh, 2002, High school guidance counselors' perceptions of the profession, *The CPA Journal*, 72(5), 73-74.



- Reed, S.A and Kratchman S.H. (1989). A longitudinal and cross sectional study of students' perceptions of the importance of job attitudes. *Journal of Accounting Education*, Vol.7, pp.171-193
- Rhodes, S.R. and Doering, M. (1983) 'An Integrated Model of Career Change', *Academy of Management Review*, 8(4): 631–9.
- Samidi, J. and Tew Y. H. (1995). The Study on the Awareness of Secondary School Students towards Accounting as a Profession, Paper presented in Accounting Seminar: Past, Present and Future, Universiti Teknologi Mara
- Saemann, G.P. & K.J. Crooker, 1999, Student perceptions of the profession and its effect on decisions to major in accounting, *Journal of Accounting Education*, 17(1), 1-22.
- Silverstone, R. and Williams, A. (1979) Recruitment, Training, Employment and Career of Women Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, *Accounting and Business Research*, 9, pp.105-121
- Sugahara, S. & G. Boland, 2005, Perceptions of the certified public accountants by accounting and non-accounting tertiary students in Japan, *Asian Review of Accounting*, 14(1/2), 149-167.
- Sugahara, S., Kurihara, O. & G. Boland, 2006, Japanese secondary school teachers' perceptions of the accounting profession, *Accounting Education: An International Journal*, 15(4), 405- 418
- Tan, L.M. & F. Laswad, 2006, Students' beliefs, attitudes and intentions to major in accounting, *Accounting Education: An International Journal*, 15(2), 167-187.

- Taylor, D. B and Dixon, B. R. (1979) Accountants and Accounting: A Student Perspective, *Accounting and Finance*, 19 (2), 51-62
- Thielens, W. Jr. (1966) Recruits for Accounting, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University.
- Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1998) USA: MICRA.
- Weil, S. & Wegner, T. 1997. Increasing the number of black chartered accountants in South Africa: an empirical review of educational issues. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 6(4):307-323.
- Wells, P. & P. Fieger, 2005, Accounting: perceptions of influential high school teachers in the USA and NZ, Faculty of Business Research Paper Series, Paper 18-2005 (AUT, Auckland, New Zealand).
- Wheeler, K.G. 1983. Perceptions of labor market variables by college students in business education and psychology. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 22(1):1-11.